Old Montour

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Old Montour—Erected in 1832

The Story of
Old Montour

MONTOUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Steubenville Pike, Allegheny County

Pennsylvania

1925

Foreword

THIS BOOK is a story of achievement—the recital of colorful incidents that make up the history of Montour church—a tale of work well done.

In these days of adequate church structures, of appropriate equipment, of excellent roadways, and of perfect security from marauding bands, it is good to remember how well our fathers wrought, and all that they endured.

We have emerged from the dim forest days when the lurking shadows were filled with possiblities of danger from man and beast.

We have hewn our way from the rough timbers of the forest aisles to the stately facade of a beautiful temple dedicated to the everlasting glory of the Eternal God, and to the uplift of mankind.

Through it all, our faith has been intact, and the torch of religious freedom has been kept alight and handed down from generation to generation.

May we continue to abide in the pathway trod by our sturdy forbears. May we be worthy of the godly lives of those who builded so well, and so mightily. May it be said of us, even as we say of them: *"A tale of work well done."*

The Story of Old Montour

MONTOUR Church bears the name of an Indian who was one of the most picturesque characters of colonial days, Andrew Montour. Madame Montour, his French mother was three-quarters white, but after her marriage to an Iroquois chief, she preferred to live with the Indians. Andrew Montour frequently went with Conrad Weiser to Indian conferences, and he was one of the few natives who fought on the side of Braddock at Turtle Creek. To reward Montour for his valuable services to the English during the French and Indian war, the governor of Pennsylvania gave him an island in the Ohio river. This island became known as Montour's Island—now Neville—and the creek at the mouth of which it is located is still called Montour's Creek. From this half-breed Indian, Andrew Montour, our church most likely took its name. In early records it is referred to as the "church of Manture's Run."

Hewers of Trees and Makers of Paths

The history of the organization of Montour is brief. The pioneers of Western Pennsylvania were better qualified to make history than to write it. They were more "familiar with the axe, the mattock, the plough, and the

rifle than with the pen." Having to struggle with the forest, with wild beasts, and with savage men, they performed heroic deeds but they had no leisure for recording them.

The physical development of the country—the felling of the forest—the building of roads—the struggle with Indians—the murder or captivity of neighbors—are events that impress themselves upon the memory and become the traditions of a settlement. Such events are recited by parents to children and are recorded in letters and newspapers. But the quiet rearing of the family altars, the first reading of the Holy Book, and the erecting of the early houses of worship, because less exciting are less clearly remembered.

A Pioneer Presbyterian Preacher

About a year before the Declaration of Independence was signed, there came through the wilderness to Western Pennsylvania a slender, dark-complexioned, none too handsome young man of twenty-three. He writes thus of his arrival and of his first night spent in this section: "Nothing remarkable happened save that Mr. Barker shot a doe, part of which we carried with us. Night coming on, and being far from any house we were forced to lodge in the woods. We sought for a place where there was water, unsaddled our horses, hobbled them with hickory bark and turned them to the hills. We then made a fire, roasted a part of our venison, and took our supper. About ten o'clock we composed ourselves to rest. I wrapped myself in my great coat and laid me on the ground with my saddle-bags for a pillow.

Thursday—"This morning we rose very early, ate our breakfast, got our horses, and set to the road again. About noon we arrived at Ezekiel York's. Here my companion left me and I had to take to the woods alone. Crossed two hills, which in some parts of the world would be called mountains, and after traveling what they called twelve miles came to the glades. My lodging this night was not much better than last night. I had a deerskin and a sheet under me, and a pillow for my head. This however, I placed under my haunch, to keep my bones from the floor, and I placed my coat under my head."

Friday—"I left the glades and traveled ten miles to one Colburn's. Here I got some grain for my horse—the first since Wednesday morning. They told me I was about ten miles from Colonel Wilson's where I intended to tarry the rest of the week; but the day being wet, the road difficult, and houses scarce, I lost my way often. About sunset I came to a cabin but it was waste. There was no one at home and the door was barred. The night being dark and very rainy, I turned my horse into a field, climbed the wall of the cabin and went into a hole in the roof that served for a chimney. I then opened the door, brought in my saddle, kindled a fire, laid myself down on a sort of bed, and slept very contentedly till morning. I then buckled on my wet clothes, got my horse, and set out, not knowing which way to steer. But before I had gone many rods, I met the owner of the cabin, told him the story, got directions of the road, and came to Col. Wilson's in time for breakfast."

This young man was none other than the great and good John McMillan. He came from that sturdy, ear-

nest, godly and liberty-loving race—the Scotch-Irish—and thus was well-fitted to meet the difficulties of this frontier region. Like Elkanah and Hannah, his pious parents, William and Margaret (Rea) McMillan had dedicated him, in purpose and in prayer, to the Gospel ministry. Having lost an infant son they solemnly vowed that if God would give them another son they would call him by the same name (John) and lend him, God willing, to the sacred office. The son was given, the vow was fulfilled, and the child thus promised was made the instrument of turning many to the Lord.

On the first Sabbath of August, 1775, McMillan preached at Mount Moriah to a small congregation. This was his first sermon in Western Pennsylvania. After mentioning the smallness of the audience he adds: "However, they seemed attentive, and some tears were shed." On Saturday, August 21, he arrived at Mr. John McDowell's on Chartier's Creek, where on the following day, he preached his first sermon in that field of his life-labor—Chartiers. On the next day he rode to Patrick McCullough's on Pigeon Creek, and on Tuesday, the twenty-fourth, he preached his first sermon in that part of his future charge in the home of Arthur Forbes.

After John McMillan's first visit to Chartier's and Pigeon Creek, he preached at several other points in this region, one of which was Fort Pitt.

He returned to his father's home at Fagg's Manor, October 1775, attended Presbytery and was appointed to go on a missionary tour to the valley of Virginia and thence westward. We can trace his progress by the help of his journal until he again arrived at Pigeon Creek on the

John McMillan

fourth Sabbath of January, 1776 and on the next Sabbath at Chartier's. He returned to the East and was ordained to the ministry but a few days before our country declared its independence.

On August 6, 1776 he married Catherine Brown of Upper Brandywine. So imminent were the perils of the time, that he did not take his young wife to the West until more than two years after his marriage. While at home she contributed her full share to the stores of the surgeons at Valley Forge. Her pastor, Rev. John Carmichael, when on a visit to Washington's camp heard the great chief complaining of the want of linen for dressing the wounds of his suffering soldiers. Carmichael returned home and on the next Sabbath made an impassioned appeal to the patriotic women of his charge asking them to spare three or four inches from the lower end of a certain garment to meet this "Crying want of the suffering army." The women of Brandywine responded to the call; and by Tuesday noon, the pastor might have been seen approaching the camp with several bags of narrow rolls of linen just such as the surgeons needed.

The Building of the First Parsonage

It was in November, 1778, that McMillan, accompanied by his family, came again to the field of his future labors. The following is from a letter written by McMillan to Dr. Carnahan, dated Chartiers, March 26, 1832:

"The cabin in which I was to live was raised, but it had neither roof, chimney nor floor. The people, however, were very kind; they assisted in preparing my house and

on the 16th day of December I removed into it; but we had neither bedstead, nor tables, nor stool, nor chair, nor bucket. All such things we had to leave behind as there was no wagonroad at that time over the mountain. We could bring nothing with us but what was carried on pack horses. We placed two boxes one on the other which served us for a table, and two kegs served us for seats; and having committed ourselves to God, in family worship, we spread a bed on the floor and slept soundly till morning. The next day, a neighbor coming to my assistance, we made a table and stool and in a little time we had everything comfortable about us.

"Sometimes, indeed, we had no bread for weeks together; but we had plenty of pumpkins and potatoes and all the necessaries of life; as for luxuries, we were not much concerned about them. We enjoyed health, the gospel and its ordinances, and pious friends. We were in the place where we believed God would have us to be; and we did not doubt but that He would provide everything necessary, and, glory to His name, we were not disappointed."

The First Congregation

Like Gideon's band, the pioneers among whom John McMillan was to work were select. None but the hardy, the brave, the rough and ready, the self-denying and the adventurous would be likely to encounter the toils and perils of the wilderness.

Their food consisted of the products of the soil, prepared with the rudest appliances, to which milk, pork, and venison were added. Their clothing, after the gar-

ments brought with them had yielded to the ravages of hard usage, was largely of their own manufacture. Flaxen cloth and linsey-woolsey constituted the garments of the women and the hunting shirts of the men, while buckskin was a staple for both moccasins and breeches.

As many as nineteen happy swains, resplendent in the one dress coat of the community, were united in the holy bonds of wedlock while so ornately clad. This garment was a wonderful creation of blue broadcloth, gloriously set off by highly polished brass buttons. This sartorial masterpiece was in common use all over the countryside and was made to do such marvelous service by fair sale, or, more often by generous loan, for many years. Its pristine glory dazzled the eye of many a coy bride, and tremendously added to the dignity of the wedding procession. May its ashes rest in a well earned peace at the bottom of some old-fashioned chest of drawers.

But nothing would please Rev. McMillan more than the simple homespuns for he had no patience with freakish fashion. He clung to the cocked hat, breeches and shoe buckles, long after others had laid them aside, and he seemed reluctant to permit woven cloth to take the place of buckskin.

The Inception of Redstone Presbytery

For some years after McMillan's arrival, our church, Montour, was a mission, depending upon Presbytery for supplies. These supplies were furnished by the Presbytery of Redstone which was erected by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 16, 1781. The entire minutes on the subject are as follows:

"At a meeting of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia held in Philadelphia ye 16th of May 1781.

"The Revd. Messrs. Joseph Smith, John McMillan, James Power, and Thaddeus Dodd having requested to be erected into a separate P.b.y. to be known by the name of P.b.y. of Redstone: the Synod grant their request, and appoint their first meeting to be held at Laurel Hill Church the third Wednesday of September next at 11 o'clock A. M."

Following are some extracts from the minutes of the early meetings of the new Presbytery.

Mount Pleasant, Wednesday, ye 7th of November 1781.

A sufficient number of members not attending to form a P.b.y. those who did meet agreed to appoint a meeting at Seweekly on the 2 tuesday of April next.

But this second meeting was no more successful than the first. However we must agree that the excuse was, indeed, a lawful one, for the minutes read as follows.

Seweekly, Tuesday, ye 9th of April 1782.

A sufficient number of members not attending, by reason of the incursions of the savages to form P.b.y. those who did meet agreed to appoint a meeting at Delap's Creek, the 3d tuesday of Octobr.

The following are complete minutes of the meeting of Redstone Presbytery, April, 1785.

Tuesday, April ye 19th, 1785.

The P.b.y. met according to adjournment at the lower

meeting house in the forks. U.P.P.S. the Revd. Messrs. John McMillan, James Power, and Thaddeus Dodd. Elders Josiah Scott, John Giffen, William McFarlin. Absent—the Revd. Messrs. John Clark, Joseph Smith and James Dunlap.

The P.b.y. was opened with a sermon from Matt. 9.12 by Mr. Power.

The reading of the minutes of our last fall and winter's meeting of P.b.y. deferred till to-morrow morning.

The P.b.y. proceeded to take in supplications for supplies.

A supplication for supplies from Donegal was brought in and read.

Adjourned to meet to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.

Wednesday, April ye 20th, 1785.

The P.b.y. met according to adjournment. U.P.P.S.Q.S. Ordered to read the minutes of the last session.

Supplications for supplies from Pitt's Township and Mill Creek were brought in and read.

Applications were made for supplies from Muddy Creek, the S. fork of ten mile, Pike Run, the horseshoe bottom, Raccoon, Manture's run, and Short Creek.

Mr. McMillan produces a settlement whereby it appears that the ballance due to him from the congregation of Chartiers, is £107 16s. 4d; which became due February ye 1st, 1785; and from the congregation of Pidgeon Creek, £91 9s. 3d., which became due November the 1st, 1784.

Mr. Power's reasons for not fulfilling his appointments

at fort Pitt and Long-run are sustained. Mr. Dodd's reasons for not attending our last meeting are sustained.

Mr. Power produces settlements between him and his congregations, whereby it appears that the ballance due from the congregation of Mount Pleasant by the 1st of May next, is £90 15s. 7d; and from the congregation of Sweekly, by the first of May next £84 1s. 0.

Upon inquiry it is found that the congregations are satisfied with the diligence and care of their respective Pastors.

Mr. Finley appointed to supply at Long-run the 4th Sab. of June; at Parkenson's mill, one day at discretion.

Mr. Smith appointed to supply at Short-Creek, ye 4th Sab. of June; at Robenson's run, the 1st Sab. of Septembr; one day at discretion, both as to time and place.

Mr. Power appointed to supply at Donegal, the 2d Sab. of May; one day at discretion, both as to time and place.

Mr. Dodd appointed to supply at the S fork of ten mile, ye 4th Sab. of August.

Mr. Dunlap at Muddy Creek, ye 1st Sab. of June; at George's Creek ye 4th Sab. of July.

Mr. McMillan at Pike-run ye 1st Sab. of July; at Brushrun, ye 4th Sab. of August; at Mantures ye 5th Sab. of July.

Henery Taylor appeared for the prosecution of his appeal but a sufficient number of members not being present to issue the matter, the consideration thereof is deferred till our next meeting.

Adjourned to meet at Pidgeon Creek, the 3d Tuesday of June next. Concluded with prayer.

First Meetings in the Woods

As there was no church building erected here at that early date (1785) the question naturally arises as to where the services were held. The old white oak on the hillside may have been a column in that first meeting house. "The groves were God's first temples" and the grand old forest trees no doubt lined the sun-lit aisles of our first church. Before a building was erected a speaker's stand called "the tent" was used by the minister. It was elevated about four feet above the ground, had a breastwork in front and a log seat in the rear. Far out from this "tent," amid the forest trees, seats were built of round logs. These were on gently ascending ground which enabled the audience to command a view of "the tent." Joseph Smith in "Old Redstone" says: "Usually long logs, hewn only on the upper side, extended from near the pulpit directly up through the area of the seats. These were elevated about the common height of a table, supported sometimes by straddling legs, but most generally by blocks of wood. On either side were similar logs, but much lower, for seats, placed sufficiently far from the higher or table logs, as to give room for walking between them. These log tables were occupied exclusively by communicants during the process of that solemn service. Before that service began and at other times, they served as a part of the ordinary sitting."

"A passing stranger if not altogether a heathen or a publican would readily recognize the sacramental Sabbath by observing these extended log tables, covered with snowy linen all radiating from the large common table, containing the vessels of the sacred symbols, and all cov-

ered with white napkins. The seats were, of course, without backs, except where the trees furnished that luxury; and such choice seats were reserved for aged ladies and the infirm. These long tables were filled and vacated four, five, six and sometimes seven times by the approaching and retreating crowd of communicants."

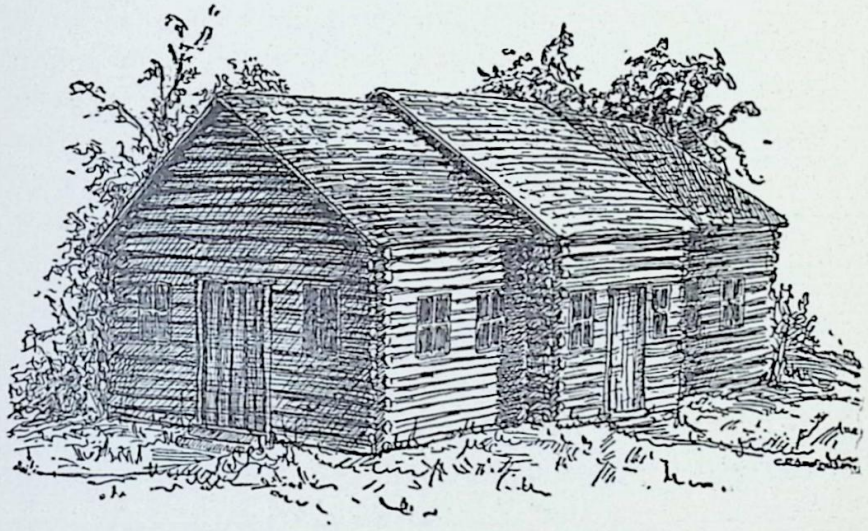
Sometimes thousands would be drawn together, and with wagons and other appliances for shelter would remain upon the ground from day to day. Services commenced on Thursday. Then on Saturday the Session met to receive candidates. All the communicants then received "tokens" entitling them to the privileges of communing on the following day. These "tokens" were simply bits of lead with the initial letters of the congregation upon them and were distributed by the pastor and the elders to all who expected to join in communion.

It was a July day when McMillan preached here in 1785. No doubt the weather was warm and the cool shade of the forest inviting. But not all services were held during the summer season for the Redstone minutes of October 19, 1785 record appointments of Mr. Clark at "Mantures-run ye 2d Sab. of Decembr" and Mr. Dunlap at Mantures-run ye 1st Sab. of April." It is hardly possible that they held services outdoors, although our ancestors seemed to have great power of endurance. Such services were not uncommon at a much later date than this for we read in the "Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania" that when Cephas Dodd was installed in 1803 at Ten Mile, the services were held in Joseph Rigg's sugar camp. The snow lay thickly on the ground and the wind

whistled through the leafless trees, but the voices of the speakers and singers were heard above all other sounds, and the people remained quiet until the solemn services were over. We prefer to picture John Clark and James Dunlap in that winter of '85 and '86 in the comfortable cabin of one of the settlers with the congregation seated before the great log fire, although we have no record to that effect.

We Build Our First Church

In the same year that Washington was inaugurated President of the United States, a log church was built at Montour, and Joseph Patterson was installed pastor. It was not a primitive log cabin "meeting-house" such as the Cool Spring congregation of Erie Presbytery completed between sunrise and sunset of a single day. In this case



A Cruciform Type of Meeting-House
Copied from "Old Redstone"

the stump of a large tree was selected as the pulpit, and the church built around it. No, ours was a more modern building than that, for it was cruciform in shape and was built of hewn logs. One arm of the cross was on the north side about the middle of the wall and in that offset was the pulpit which was reached by several steps from the floor. Just in front of the pulpit, on a platform raised a few steps from the floor and inclosed in front and on one side, stood the choir. The choir consisted of two persons, one to line out the Psalms or Hymns, and the other to "pitch the tune." Opposite the pulpit in the other arm of the cross or offset, was a door.

There were no bells to summon the people to worship. On Sabbath morning for the space of an hour they would be assembling, coming on horseback and on foot. Women who had walked barefooted sat down on logs and put on their shoes when they came in sight of the "meeting house." Those who came early sat down in the shade and waited the time of the service. Through the forest ways in all directions might be seen the horses tethered to the trees. At the proper time the ministers slowly and dignifiedly led the way into the church closely followed by the reverent congregation.

For a long time our forefathers had no means of heating their churches in winter. We do not know when the first stove was installed. Mill Creek records such a luxury in 1809. When it was proposed to introduce stoves, it was resisted by some as an innovation almost heretical. Sometimes an earthen hearth would be placed in the center of the meeting house, and a pile of wood or charcoal would afford some heat; and the open puncheon

floors, and abundant crevices between the logs, afforded escape to the noxious gases which else had suffocated our orthodox ancestors. We are told that occasionally an old foot-stove, that had done duty in New England, was filled with coals and brought to church. But this was thought to be effeminate and none but the aged women would resort to it.

Our First Pastor

But what about the man who took charge of our congregation in 1789? As already stated his name was Joseph Patterson. Was he a man of sufficient stamina to guide this earnest band of frontiersmen? The question is answered in these words of Rev. Joseph Stevenson:

"In 1778, Vance's Fort (Cross Creek), into which the families living adjacent had been driven by the Indians, was the scene of a remarkable work. There was one pious man in the fort, Joseph Patterson, a layman, an earnest devout Christian, whose zeal had not waned even amid the storms and terrors of war; and during the long days and nights of their besiegement he talked with his careless associates of an enemy more to be dreaded than the Indians, a death more terrible than by the scalping knife. As they were shut up within very narrow limits, his voice, though directed to one or two, could be easily heard by the whole company and thus his personal exhortations became public addresses.

One of his converts was Thomas Marquis who later became pastor of Cross Creek congregation where he labored for many years. Marquis knew all too keenly the ways of the savages for shortly after his arrival in this

unbroken wilderness he and his family were called to mourn the loss of a brother of Mrs. Marquis—Mr. Park—who, close to their own dwelling, was tomahawked and scalped by an Indian."

Joseph Patterson came from the county of Down, Ireland, where he had been born in 1752. He taught school near Germantown, Pa. In the year 1778 he moved to Westmoreland County, now Washington County. Shortly after his arrival in this section he met with a backset, which is recorded as follows in "Old Redstone":

"Sometime after his removal to the West he and some others made a purchase of land and paid the money. It was soon discovered that the seller was not the owner, and consequently, that the title was worthless and the money lost. How much Mr. Patterson's investment amounted to is not known, nor is it material to the story; only that it was a greater loss than he could well bear. The other purchasers had recourse to law and advised him also to "employ counsel." "I have heard in the Bible of a Wonderful Counsellor," was the quaint reply, and my application shall be to him." He thereupon made it a matter of repeated and earnest prayer; not, we presume for a specific restitution of the money—which no intelligent Christian could do, in absolute terms, but that by some Providential interposition, this serious loss might be made up to him, or that he might be duly reconciled to it, and eventually none the worse for it. The prospect of the specific answer was small; for McClure, the man who obtained the money had absconded both from the neighborhood and from his family. But as Mr. Patterson was passing near McClure's house, not long after a child

running up to him begged him to come in. As he did so, the wife handed him the identical bag with the identical dollars and explained to him the strange action in such words as these: "When my husband went away he charged me to give this money back to you; for said he, 'I am afraid the man will pray me to death if I don't return him his money.' " Thus his suit was gained; the others, it is said, never got anything.

Reverend Patterson Ordained

It was not until the fall of 1785, when Joseph Patterson was thirty-five years old, that he began his studies for the ministry. After two years of work under Rev. Joseph Smith, he appeared before the Presbytery at Round Hill in 1787. The Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery give us some insight into the thoroughness of the methods of the Presbyteries of those days in the examination of candidates for the ministry.

Round Hill Thursday ye 19th of April 1787.

Messrs. Joseph Patterson and James McGready having offered themselves to be taken on trials in order to their being licensed to preach the Gospel, the P.b.y. proceeded to examine them on their experimental acquaintance with religion, Cases of Conscience, Logic, and moral Philosophy, and Mr. McGready on Latin and Greek, in all which the P.b.y. received such satisfaction that they were sustained as parts of trial.

Friday April ye 20th.

Mr. Patterson is appointed to prepare an Exegesis on

this theme: Whether miracles are an evidence of a divine mission, and what miracles do prove such mission; to be delivered at our next meeting. And Mr. McGready on this, an sit concursus Dei cum omnibus hominum actionibus, to be delivered at our next fall's meeting.

Lebanon Wednesday August 22d 1787.

Mr. Patterson brought in and read the Exegesis appointed him, which was sustained as part of trials; and he is appointed to prepare an Homily on Gal. 3.24, first clause, to be delivered at our next meeting.

Thursday August ye 23d.

P.b.y. proceeded to examine Messrs. John Brice, Joseph Patterson and James McGready on natural Philosophy, and Mr. Hughes with them on Theology at some length; which were sustained as parts of trial.

Pigeon Creek Thursday October ye 18th 1787.

Mr. Patterson brought in and read the homily appointed to him at our last, which was sustained as part of trials. And he is appointed to prepare a presbyterial exercise on Gen. 3.15 to be delivered at our next meeting.

Bethel Tuesday Decembr ye 11, 1787.

Mr. Patterson brought in and read the presbyterial exercise appointed him at our last, which was sustained as part of trials; and is appointed to prepare a lecture on Joh. 15.1-8 to be delivered at our next meeting.

Wednesday ye 12th of Decembr.

The P.b.y. proceeded to examine Messrs. John Brice,

James Hughes, Joseph Patterson, and James McGready on systematic divinity, and having obtained satisfaction do sustain the same as part of trials.

Mount Pleasant Wednesday April ye 16th 1788.

Mr. Paterson and Mr. McGready having delivered the lectures appointed them at our last meeting, the P.b.y. sustain them as part of trial.

Friday ye 18th of April.

Mr. Patterson is appointed to prepare a popular sermon on 1 Joh. 5.4 and Mr. McGready a popular sermon on Rom. 5.20 to be delivered at our next meeting.

Chartiers Tuesday August ye 12th, 1788.

The P.b.y. was opened with a sermon on 1 Joh. 5.4. by Mr. Patterson. Mr. McGready also delivered a sermon on Rom. 5.20 as appointed at our last meeting, both of which the P.b.y. sustain as parts of trial.

Wednesday August 13th 1788.

The P.b.y. having received sufficient testimonials in favour of Messrs. Joseph Patterson and James McGready, of their having gone through a regular course of litrature, of their good moral character, and of their being in the communion of the Church, proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for their licensure: and they having given satisfaction as to their accomplishments in litrature, as to their experimental acquaintance with religion, and as to their proficiency in divinity and other studies, the P.b.y. did, and hereby do express their ap-

probation of all those parts of trial; and they having adopted the Confession of faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to Candidates to be licensed the P.b.y. did and hereby do license them, the sd. Joseph Patterson and James McGready to preach the Gospel of Christ as probationers for the holy Ministry within the bounds of this P.b.y. or wherever they shall be orderly called.

Mr. Patterson appointed to preach at Mantures ye 3d. Sab. of August, at Short Creek the 4th, at Muddy-Creek ye 5th, at Lower George's Creek ye 1st Sab. of Septembr, at Upper George's Creek ye 2d, at Sandy-Creek ye 3d, at Potato Garden ye 1st Sab. of Octobr.

But Mr. Patterson was soon located in a regular charge thus rendering unnecessary a long journey from one church to another. We are not told how he made these long journeys each week but it is safe to suppose that he was obliged to go on foot. Minutes of April 1789 record two calls extended to him:

Pidgeon Creek, Tuesday ye 21st of April 1789.

A call for Mr. Joseph Patterson from the united congregations of Upper Raccoon and Mantures-run was brought in and read.

A call for Mr. Joseph Patterson from the united congregations of Unity and Salem was brought in and read.

Both these calls were presented by the P.b.y. to Mr. Patterson, which he took under consideration.

Thursday April ye 23rd.

Mr. Patterson gave up the Call from Unity and Salem

Joseph Patterson

congregations and declares his acceptance of the united congregations of Upper Racoon and Mantures provided that some difficulties now subsisting be removed before our next meeting.

Messrs. Brice, Hughs and Patterson are appointed to supply as much as they can conveniently in those congregations from whom they have received Calls untill our next meeting.

It is interesting to note that Joseph Patterson gave his decision in favor of Montour and Raccoon just eight days before George Washington delivered his inaugural address at New York.

Our curiosity is aroused as to the nature of the "difficulties which subsisted in Montour and Raccoon." But we have no light on the matter and rejoice that they were not of so serious a nature as to hinder Joseph Patterson from accepting the charge.

Chartiers, Monday ye 25 of May 1789.

Mr. Patterson reports that those difficulties which subsisted in the congregations of Upper Racoon and Mantures are now removed.

Mr. Patterson having accepted the Call from upper Raccoon and Mantures run, he is appointed to prepare a discourse on Jam. 3.6 to be delivered at our August meeting as part of trials in order to ordination.

The discourse on Jam. 3.6 was delivered at Laurel Hill on Tuesday August 8, 1789 but it was not until November of the same year that Mr. Patterson was ordained. The minutes on the ordination are as follows:

Laurel Hill Novembr ye 11th 1789.

The P.b.y., according to appointment, proceeded to the ordination of Mr. Joseph Patterson and did, by fasting and Prayer, and with the imposition of the hands of the P.b.y. set him apart to the holy office of the Gospel Ministry.

Mr. Patterson now takes his seat as a member.

Not all of Mr. Patterson's time was given to Montour for at the meeting of Presbytery at Round Hill on October 19, 1790, he was appointed to supply Mill-Creek on the first Sabbath of March and to "catechise the congregation at Lower Racoon one Sab. at discretion."

The Minister's Salary and How it was Paid

It is indeed somewhat of a relief that the Presbytery no longer appoints a neighboring minister "to catechise" our congregation. While we are free from that strain we are still confronted with the money question. The statement that money was not a necessity when our region was a sparsely settled wilderness, is an unwarranted assumption disproved by the minutes of 1792.

Bethel Thursday ye 19th April 1792.

Mr. Patterson reports that Racoon congregation will be indebted to him on the 22d. Instant the sum of £9.12.1, and Mantures run at the same time, the sum of £16.9.4.

How this money was paid we do not know but it is safe to suppose, judging from records of neighboring congregations, that it was not all given in cash. As late as the

year 1799 when a call was extended Elisha McCurdy from Three Springs and Cross Roads, provision was made for his salary of £120 to be paid in regular yearly payments "one half in cash, the other in merchantable wheat at market price, to be delivered at any place, which the pastor might appoint, not more than five miles distant from the respective meeting houses."

In 1789, the church of Fairfield, Redstone Presbytery promised their minister his salary in money or grain, at the following prices: "Wheat at four shillings the bushel, rye or corn at two shillings and six pence per bushel."

Rev. S. J. M. Eaton in the "Centenary Memorial" gives the following notable instance of poverty and enterprise alike which occurred in the days of Joseph Smith's pastorate at Cross Creek and Upper Buffalo:

"The minister had purchased a farm but was in debt for it. His salary was unpaid. Grain was plenty, but money was scarce. Wheat would not bring over twelve and a half cents per bushel. The minister was notified that he must pay for his land or leave it. Three year's salary was now due. If Mr. Smith left his farm, he must abandon his churches. The people could not raise the money. They could not borrow. They came together and sought God's counsel. They could furnish any quantity of wheat. Mr. Moore, the miller, would grind the wheat. They resolved to bring their wheat, turn it into flour, and send it to New Orleans to market. The wheat was brought on the backs of horses from two to twenty-six miles distance, from all over the surrounding country. A flat boat was built. The flour was placed on board. Who would undertake the charge of running it down the

river, amid the danger of wreck, and robbers, and savages?

"An old elder, William Smiley, sixty-four years of age arises and says: 'Here am I, send me.' Two young men volunteer to go as his assistants. All the congregation assembles to see the party set out on their voyage. The pastor gives out a hymn, then offers prayer; the farewells are said, and the boat is pushed out into the stream.

"More than nine months pass away without tidings. There is neither mail nor telegraph, and the birds brought no news. At length, one Sabbath morning, as the people asembled for worship they found old father Smiley seated on his rude bench before the pulpit, calm, devout, as though nothing notable had happened.

"At the close of the service the people were notified to meet early the following week to hear the report of the trading party. All were present on Monday. In a brief speech, after thanks had been offered for the safe return, the old elder reported that all had gone well. They had reached New Orleans safely, and sold their flour at twenty-seven dollars per barrel. He then poured the proceeds upon the table, a larger heap of gold than any of them had ever seen.

"The young men were paid one hundred dollars each. Father Smiley was asked his charge. He replied that he ought to receive as much as the young men although he had not worked as hard as they, but would take nothing until the minister was paid. The back salary was paid with one year in advance. Elder Smiley received three hundred dollars, and a large dividend remained to those who furnished the flour."

Later Life of Joseph Patterson

That the salary due Joseph Patterson was forthcoming from some source is evident from the number of years he continued to labor among our people. It was not until April 16, 1799 (the year of Washington's death) that he resigned his charge here. He continued his pastoral relation to Raccoon until Oct. 15, 1816. His last days were spent in Pittsburgh in works of usefulness seeking out the poor and distributing Bibles to the boatmen.

Some expense attended the distribution of Bibles and he was obliged to make collections. He felt that he had a claim on any citizen who had a spare dollar. In one of these collecting rounds, he was met by an acquaintance.

"Well, Father Patterson, what errand are you on today?"

"I am going to the man that keeps store over there to get a dollar for my Bible distribution."

"Why, certainly, you will not go to such a man as that —an open infidel and a scoffer. You will not get a cent from him."

"Yes, I will, I'll get a dollar. Come and see."

They walked into the store. The old gentleman was not welcome from the first, but upon making his request he was treated with positive scorn. The indignant man would give nothing for any such purpose.

"Do you say you won't?"

"I say, I won't."

"Well, I'll go home with my subscription book and lay it before the Lord and tell him that Mr. ——— absolutely refused to give anything toward the distribution of the Bible."

There was something about this which seemed to frighten the man, unbeliever as he was. Opening the money drawer, he threw out a piece, saying in a subdued voice, "Here, take your dollar."

He was equally successful in disposing of the Bible and Testaments. Through dwellings and shops on wharves and boats, he carried the precious words he loved so dearly, and accompanied each copy sold or given with impressive remarks. It is told of him that one day he approached a stalwart boatman and asked him if he had a Bible.

"No" was the answer.

"Then I will sell you one for fifty cents."

The rough man paid for the book and as soon as Mr. Patterson was out of hearing exclaimed with an oath:

"This is the third or fourth Bible I have bought from that preacher lately."

"Why did you not tell him that you had one"

"Because then he would have asked me how often I had read it? What was in it? Did I like it? And other questions; and as I had not opened one of them, I could not bear such firing from such a venerable old gentleman, and I would rather buy a dozen than offend him."

Joseph Patterson died Feb. 4, 1832, in the eightieth year of his age. So much was there to tell of his life and work that his obituary was continued in seven successive issues of "The Presbyterian," published in Philadelphia.

Pastorate of Reverend John McClain

The second pastor of this church was Rev. John McClain, ordained and installed August 27, 1800. The fol-

lowing is from a brief history in an old session book which records the minutes from 1826 to 1857. "He (John McClain) was a very acceptable preacher; and the congregation grew much under his care. The grand Adversary was, however, permitted to lead him astray in the way of intemperance. A charge was laid in against him before the Presbytery of Ohio; he was found guilty and deposed from the ministry in 1810."

The question of intemperance was given serious consideration about this time. From the minutes of 1816 we would conclude that John McClain was not the only minister at fault. The minutes read:

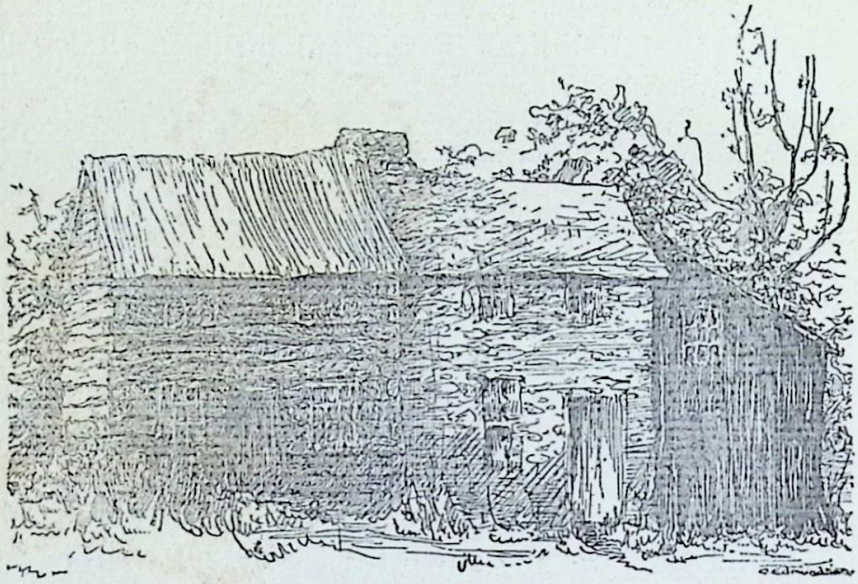
"The Synod recommends to all the ministers and professors of religion within their bounds to abstain from the unnecessary use of ardent spirits, and to endeavor both by precept and example to check the progress of this growing and destructive vice."

The Reverend Michael Law—Minister

Michael Law became our third pastor. His residence was the log house which may be seen at the Cliff Mine bridge. His were trying days. The War of 1812 brought anxiety to the homes of many of his people, for the Indians were to be the allies of our foes and the dread of their cruelties on the frontier led some to shun a defensive war against them.

In 1818 smallpox made its appearance in this part of the country. The people became greatly alarmed and looked to vaccination as the only safe preventive. We do not know how Rev. Law met the situation. He may have done as did Rev. Elisha Macurdy of Cross Roads

and Three Springs. A quack doctor in the neighborhood, determining to avail himself of the panic to promote his own interest, offered his services, demanding at the same time a most exorbitant fee. Mr. Macurdy having heard of this attempt at imposition, immediately procured the



Michael Law's Cabin

vaccine and on the next Sabbath announced that he would vaccinate without charge, all who would meet him at the church on the following Thursday. His offer was so much appreciated that two hundred appeared on the day set, and it was necessary to make a second appointment.

A Tremendous Controversy: Hymns or Psalms?

Perhaps the most troublesome problem of Mr. Law's pastorate was to persuade his people that they could wor-

Montour Church—Cornerstone Laid October 19, 1924

ship the Lord by singing Hymns as well as Psalms. During his pastorate Hymns were brought unto use in public worship.

The question of Hymn singing had been under consideration for years before this date. In 1763 an overture was brought into the Synod of New York and Philadelphia as to the propriety of singing "Dr. Watt's imitation of David's Psalms." No specific answer was given, although the Synod declared that it had "no objection to the use of said imitation by such ministers and congregations as incline to use it, until the matter of Psalmody be further considered." The following is taken from the "Centenary Memorial":

"The matter passed along with some attention until 1787, when the following action was taken: 'The Synod did allow and hereby do allow that Dr. Watt's imitation of David's Psalms, as revised by Mr. Barlow, be sung in the churches and families under their care.'

"They further declared that they were far from disapproving of Rouse's Version, commonly called the Old Psalms, in those who were in the use of them and chose them, discouraged harsh and unchristian censure on either side, and exhorted to be more tender and charitable on these heads.

"There were some ministers and congregations where Rouse was the only acknowledged Psalmody. Sometimes a compromise was made. The service was commenced with an Old Psalm and concluded with Watt's. One of the old ministers used Watt's in his family worship, and at prayer meetings, until the way was opened for its use in the church. Still, on the first occasion of giving out a

Psalm from the new book, an irate member was so sorely grieved with the impropriety of the proceeding that he started from his seat, approached the pulpit and threatened to drag the minister down by the neck.

"Good old Samuel Porter was sorely troubled over the matter. He could not think of using anything but Rouse. Yet on one occasion, hearing a strange congregation singing the hymn:

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God,

his warmth and ardor overcame his scruples and he joined in with them, declaring that if his conscience would not allow him to sing such words he would wring its neck.

"Apart from the matter of conscience, there was little difficulty in introducing the new hymnology, as books were not generally necessary. The Psalm or Hymn was always lined out. Sometimes one line was given at a time and sometimes two. This was done by the clerk or leader of the singing.

"The clerk was an important officer, and in dignity and importance was second only to the minister himself. He occupied an elevated seat just under the pulpit and when the Psalm was announced arose and gave out the lines in a curious, half-singing tone, managing to close on the precise key on which the tune was to be commenced.

"The singing was primitive. At the first, all sang a single part, called the 'air.' Gradually other parts were introduced—the 'trible,' the 'counter,' as they were called, and the bass.

"The tunes were not numerous; they could easily be ac-

quired. They were known as 'The twelve tunes of David.' Sometimes the clerk had the notes of them copied in 'buckwheat characters,' on the fly-leaves of his Pslam-book, and referred to them surreptitiously, as the minister did to the notes hidden away in his pocket Bible.

"But the spirit of change came. Emigrants from New England passed through the settlements, on their way to Ohio. Some of them stayed on through the winter. Certain of these Eastern men were musicians and introduced new tunes; especially a wonderful variety of tune called the 'Fugue.' A peculiarity of these fugue tunes was, that after the four parts had passed together over the first two lines of the stanza, they separated, leading off one after the other, each singing for itself, yet managing to come out together at the finish. These fancy tunes became immensely popular.

"A favorite among them was 'Sherburne,' usually sung to the Christmas Hymn:

'While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.'

"After singing the first two lines in the ordinary staid manner, the air would lead off, 'The angel of the Lord'; the counter would then take up the same line; when it had advanced the same distance the tenor would strike in; then the bass; until the hearer would be ready to suppose that all the angels on the plain of Bethlehem were singing, each on his own account, with the prospect of being involved in inextricable confusion. Yet by judicious repeating on the part of those in advance, and hastening of

those in the rear, the parts all managed to come out exactly together. It was a wonderful feat, however.

"In process of time, as books multiplied and became common, the matter of singing without lining out became important. In many places the prejudices of the people were strongly aroused against this as against a New Testament Psalmody. They had become so accustomed to lining out as to imagine that this was really a part of divine worship.

"Gradually, however, the change was made that was, eventually, to satisfy the great majority of the worshipers. These changes, however—first, the adoption of the hymns of Watts, then the dispensing with lining out—resulted in the withdrawal of many from the Presbyterian Church. These disgruntled brethren preferred to go to other bodies, where the old system of Psalmody was in use.

"The clerk had duties of another kind to perform. These were somewhat delicate in their nature, yet always discharged with dignity and firmness. This was the public proclamation of the bans of matrimony in the church on three consecutive Sabbaths. It was done in this form: There is a purpose of matrimony between John Smith and Hannah Brown, of which this is the first publication: The following Sabbath the formula was changed to the second, and then the third publication, when it was supposed to be proper for the marriage ceremony to take place."

Rev. Michael Law—Missionary to the Indians

In August, 1821, Mr. Law was sent by the Western Missionary Society, on an exploring tour to the northern

part of Ohio to ascertain the most desirable site for a Missionary station among the Wyandotte Indians. There had been an intense interest in missionary work in this section for many years. A Wyandotte Indian by the name of Barnett, called in the language of his tribe "Ununguа" or "Flying Arrow" was converted and worked among his own people. To avoid mistakes in the computation of time, he carried with him an Indian almanac. This consisted of a pin and a paper with seven holes in it. On the Sabbath, the pin was stuck into the first hole and moved forward one hole each successive day, until the week was completed by putting the pin into the last hole. Thus he computed time and was enabled to mark the return of the Sabbath.

Elisha P. Swift went with Michael Law on his Missionary tour in 1821. At the point where Toledo, Ohio, now stands they had an interview with the Indians. To them they explained, as well as they could, the object of their visit which was to locate a mission. But, as they had to address the Indians through two intermediate interpreters, they were not certain that they were fully comprehended.

The Indians received their communication with respect mingled with caution, having had their minds prejudiced by traders who dreaded the introduction of the gospel among them. The time set for a council was so far distant that it was decided that Mr. Swift should return home and report their progress to the Synod and that Mr. Law should remain and hold the proposed council.

The Indians failed to perform their engagement and

did not meet Mr. Law as was expected. While remaining for the purpose of doing all in his power to secure the object of his appointment, he was taken with fever. This disabled him for any further efforts and he left Maumee with the hope of reaching home. He was unable to go farther than Ashland, Ohio, where on October 9, 1821, he died. He was buried among strangers. On November 10, 1846, his remains were disinterred and removed to the cemetery of Bethany, where they were reinterred beside those of his wife.

Rev. Robert Laird, 1826-1828

Five years after Mr. Law's death or on June 22, 1826, Rev. Robert Laird was installed the fourth pastor of the church. We know little about him or his work except that during his short pastorate of but two years, seventy-three were added to the membership of the church.

A New Pastor and a New Church

When our next pastor, John K. Cunningham, a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate, accepted a call to Montour we were in need of both a new church and a parsonage. He built a house on property adjoining the church property and to it he took his bride who was Miss Matilda Guy, a daughter of Josiah Guy, Sr., an elder of the church at that time.

When Rev. Cunningham entered upon his work here, the membership of the church was 208. No doubt the old log church was somewhat crowded. At any rate the minutes of Sept. 28, 1830, record action toward the erection of a new building: "This day the congregation agreed by

a public vote to enter immediately on some arrangement for building a meeting house."

The pastor apparently had some ability as an architect for he and two members of the session were appointed "to prepare a draft for the meeting house and present it at the next meeting." In September the committee reported several drafts but the one representing the pulpit in the end was adopted. The congregation took two years to consider the matter and perhaps to secure sufficient funds, so that it was not until the spring of 1832 that the brick was burned and the fall of the same year that the building was begun. According to tradition the new building was built around the old log church and the people continued to worship in the old church until the new one was ready to plaster and floor, when, one day at a congregational meeting, they tore the old one down and took it out at the windows and doors of the new building.

Birth of the "Presbyterian Banner"

An authentic story of the erection of the brick building might have been recorded in the "Weekly Recorder" had we access to a copy of that date. This weekly, which was the first religious newspaper issued in the United States combining religious and secular news, was edited by Rev. John Andrews. The weekly was published for the first time July 5, 1814 but it was not until 1821 that publication began in Pittsburgh, where it has since continued to be published, though the name has been changed four times. The first change was to the "Spectator," then the "Herald," then the "Presbyterian Advocate," and now the "Presbyterian Banner."

The first editor, John Andrews, was called to Sewickley Church in 1822. They asked for "the one-third part of his time to be expended in Sewickley Congregation, on the Pittsburgh and Beaver Road." For his services nineteen persons subscribed the sum of $35.50. By 1830 they were prosperous enough to buy their pastor a horse, of which action we have the following record:

Sept. 24, 1830. "We, the subscribers promise to pay the sums annexed to our names for the purpose of procuring the Rev. John Andrews a horse to enable him to perform his labors." Thirty-three names appear on the list with a total amount subscribed of $17.87½. James Allison in "Presbyterianism in Sewickley Valley" says, "If this was the horse Mr. Andrews was accustomed to ride several years afterwards when I frequently saw him, the sum mentioned was certainly its full value."

The new church, after its completion, and before John K. Cunningham accepted a call to the Presbytery of Steubenville attracted many new communicants—a greater number than ever before in the history of the church.

Rev. Gordon and Western Theological Seminary

Thomas P. Gordon, the next pastor, was graduated at the Western Theological Seminary in 1837. Our ministers in the West need come from Princeton no longer, for in 1825 the General Assembly took into consideration the building up of a great Theological Seminary for the growing wants of the West. A commission was appointed and directed by the Assembly to consult as to the most suitable location for a central Western Theological Seminary. In their report they were not unanimous as to the

location of the proposed Seminary. The subject occupied the attention of the Assembly for two successive meetings and was finally determined by a small majority in favor of Allegheny Town owing to the absence of western members. It was predicted by the western members that a Theological Seminary at that place never would answer the demands of the church in the great West. The following is from the "Western Presbyterian Herald" published in Louisville, Ky., Dec. 14, 1837: "Allegheny Town has no claim to be central. Its communications and sympathies are eastward. It is in a state, the largest portion of which is eastward of the mountains and consequently it is a location which connects the Seminary, its Professors and pupils more with the East than the West.

"Are our eastern bred clergymen adequate to the work? They may be good and pious and learned, but what do they know of the roughness of the western cabin—the coarseness of a frontier table, or the scantiness of a new settler's bed?"

In spite of the objections of the westerners of Louisville, the Seminary was located in Allegheny Town and we have depended upon it to train our young men for the ministry for almost a century.

Rev. Thomas Stevenson, Minister, 1846-1854

In 1846 the Western Theological Seminary furnished our seventh pastor, Thomas Stevenson. He was installed June 11, 1846. After he left our church in 1854, he preached within the bounds of Huntingdon Presbytery until the outbreak of the Civil War when he became a

chaplain for a negro regiment. He accompanied this regiment through all the Wilderness Campaign to the storming of Richmond. After peace was declared Chaplain Stevenson remained in the army. Most of the colored troops were illiterate and Stevenson with the spelling book in one hand and the Bible in the other, taught and preached.

While encamped along the Rio Grande, cholera broke out. Mr. Stevenson was attacked and although he lived through it, his health and vigor were impaired and he died in Brownsville, Texas, in February of 1867.

Pastors Since 1850

Isaac McKinney who took up the work here in 1857 remained but a short time as his health was too delicate to bear the exposure of a country charge.

Two years later, 1854, Rev. Levi Risher was installed. Rev. Phipps said in his "Centennial Sermon" that although Mr. Risher was a practical preacher and an agreeable pastor, he used the manuscript, contrary to the traditions of the fathers. At the end of a year the pulpit was again vacant.

Next came Rev. H. C. Foulke, who immediately after his graduation from the Western Theological Seminary in 1864 accepted a call to Montour and Forest Grove. He was succeeded in 1868 by Rev. J. J. Beacon who found the membership of the congregation the lowest in the history of the church. However he was an earnest worker and by his untiring effort increased the membership from sixty to one hundred seventy. In 1877, when he asked to be released, the congregation was not willing

to let him go. They appointed a committee to canvass the congregation to ascertain what amount of money could be raised in case Rev. Beacon could be persuaded to continue his pastorate. Although the committee reported the attractive sum of twelve hundred dollars, he did not accept our call, but chose instead our neighboring church, Forest Grove.

Henry F. McClelland then took up the work here. The present parsonage was built shortly after his arrival. Many changes took place about this time. Since a large number of members came in spring wagons instead of on horseback, the old "upping block" on the hillside was replaced by a large platform, located near the present flag pole. Top buggies began to make their appearance among the vehicles in the church yard. Horses were tied to a long row of hitching posts along the roadside. These as well as the sheds have been removed to make room for the conveyances of the twentieth century.

Rev. R. J. Phipps came in 1886. Two years later we celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the erection of the log church and the coming of Joseph Patterson into this community. At this "Centennial," Rev. Phipps preached an interesting and instructive historical sermon.

In 1889, just one hundred years after the installation of our first minister, the congregation, by a unanimous vote extended a call to Rev. H. O. Rosborough. Under his leadership the church continued to grow. The Sunday-School was in a flourishing condition. Rev. Rosborough was known and loved by the children of the community for it was his custom to visit the various public schools of North Fayette, Robinson, Finley and Moon townships.

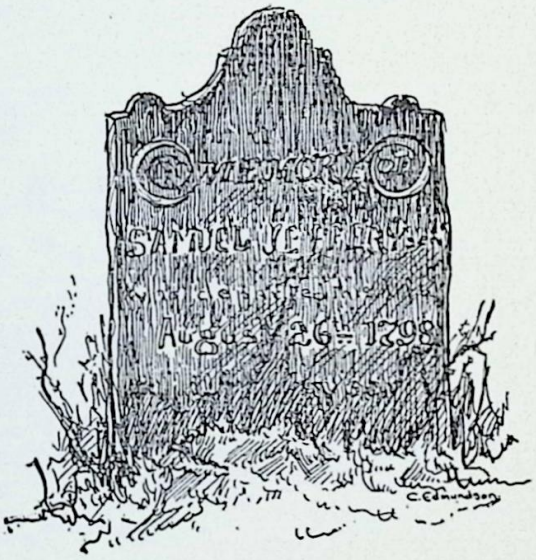
In June of 1898, Rev. Rosborough resigned and in the remarkably short period of three months, or September 11, 1898, a call was extended to Rev. J. C. Laughlin.

Under his direction the Ladies' Aid Society, one of the most active organizations of the church, had its beginning.There was also an active interest in the Christian Endeavor Society and the number in attendance at its meetings on Sabbath evenings was usually quite large. This may have been due in part—not to good roads—but to the fact that many of our young people were the proud possessors of that most luxurious vehicle—the rubber-tired buggy.

It was during the pastorate of Rev. A. L. Hail that we witnessed the "passing of the horse and buggy" and the coming of the automobile. Rev. Hail was among the first to invest in a "machine." One by one the members of the congregation took the same step. Finally the last horse and buggy disappeared and the row of sheds on the brow of the hill was deserted. But this was not the condition within the church for the pews were well filled and there was a lively interest in all of the organizations connected with the church. Rev. Hail did more than preach to us, for, much to our delight, he sang with us and for us. It was our good fortune to have with us for several months, Rev. Hail's father and mother, Rev. and Mrs. J. B. Hail, who were home on a furlough from the Presbyterian Mission Field at Osaka, Japan.

Our present pastor, Robert L. Roberts has been with us but two years. Most of this time we have been busily engaged in planning and building our new church, in which work Rev. Roberts has taken an active part. The

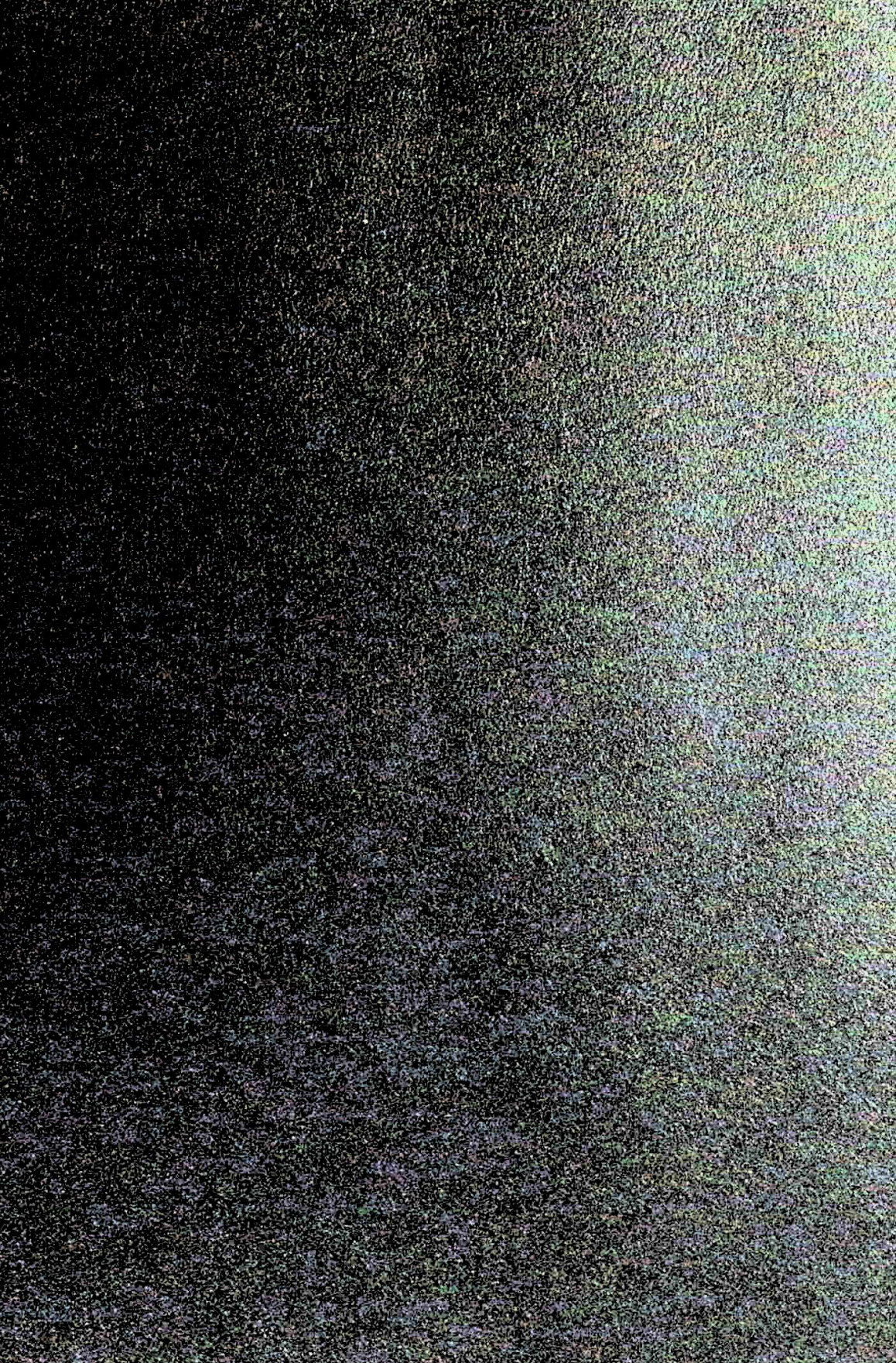
cornerstone was laid October 19, 1924. Hundreds gathered to witness this ceremony. During the stillness of the hour two airplanes appeared, passed rapidly and noisily overhead, and then disappeared in the distance. We thought of the days when our ancestors walked miles and miles to the meetin' house—grandfather armed with his flint-lock rifle and grandmother with her best shoes tied up in a 'kerchief. Yes, times, indeed, have changed. But we trust that the same gospel will bring the same hope and comfort to us in our new church that it brought to our sturdy ancestors who attended the primitive log-cabin meeting house.



The Oldest Tombstone in Montour Cemetery

Ministers of Montour

Joseph Patterson .....1789—1799
John McClain .....1800—1808
Michael Law .....1811—1821
Robert Laird .....1826—1828
John K. Cunningham .....1830—1840
Thomas Gordon .....1842—1845
Thomas Stevenson .....1846—1854
Isaac N. McKinney .....1857—1860
Levi Risher .....1862—1863
H. C. Foulke .....1864—1867
J. J. Beacom .....1868—1877
H. T. McClelland .....1878—1881
R. J. Phipps .....1886—1889
H. O. Rosborough .....1889—1898
J. C. Laughlin .....1898—1908
A. L. Hail.....1912—1921
Robert L. Roberts .....1923—



Montours - 200 Years
A Bicentennial Address

Tonight we are celebrating a great event - the 200th anniversary of Montours Church. Now there are some who would dispute this date as there really is no **concrete** evidence that the congregation actually began **as Montours Church** in that year. But we do know a congregation was meeting here in 1785 because Presbytery records show minutes of "supplies" being sent. It is tradition and we accept this tradition.

During our nation's bicentennial I heard the phrase "200 years under this form of government" and I cringed. That's not true! The **Constitution** didn't start until 1789. We were celebrating the Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence which did **not** set up a form of government. It was a beginning - a potential. And that's what we're celebrating. If it was right for our nation to celebrate 1976, it's right for us to celebrate 1978.

Some people felt there was too much fuss about our country's bicentennial, too much hullabaloo; it grew tiresome. However, in reading some of our old histories I discovered a former member, Centennial Butler, so named because she was born in 1876. I don't remember **anyone** naming their baby Bicentennial in 1976!

Last year when Dave and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary someone came up to us and asked, "How did you do it? How have you stayed married for 25 years?" Immediately, one of us said, "It was easy," and the other said "It hasn't been easy." (I won't say who said which). Then we laughed because we both were right. In some ways it's easy but in others . . .

Tonight we think of the same question - 200 years! How did we do it? Was it easy? Or was it a struggle?

Let's look at some of the elements of what makes up a Church to help us decide.

Was it the ministers? Were they leaders who held Montours together and led her forward through the years?

If you agree, you could cite some good evidence about Montours' first minister, Joseph Patterson. He was born in Ireland in 1752, married and emigrated to the colonies. He taught school near Germantown, Pa., and according to one writer, was present at the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. He spent two years as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He came west in 1779 to Washington County (which we were a part of then) and became a pioneer farmer and elder in the Buffalo Church. Joseph Patterson is a man after my own heart in that he was 35 years old when he decided to study for the ministry. There was no seminary here then so he was tutored under Rev. Joseph Smith. He was examined by Presbytery in 1787 on his knowledge of religion, logic,

philosophy, Latin and Greek. He passed!

Many stories are told of Joseph Patterson's absolute faith and trust in God. A friend wrote of Joseph Patterson, "He went among us the happiest person in society." I think that says something about his faith.

He accepted a call from the combined churches of Montours and Raccoon in 1789, just 8 days before George Washington became President of the United States.

Soon after arriving here in Western Pennsylvania, Joseph Patterson and some others bought some land and paid cash for it. It was soon discovered that the man who sold them the land wasn't the owner; the title was worthless and their money was lost. The others decided to sue and advised Patterson to get a lawyer too. He said "I have heard in the Bible of a Wonderful Counsellor and my application shall be to Him." He then made this a matter of repeated and earnest prayer, not for a specific restitution of the money but that by some providential intervention the loss might be made up. The prospect of God answering this was small as McClure, the man who took the money, had left both from the neighborhood and his family. But as Rev. Patterson was passing McClure's house not long after, a child came running up and begged him to come in. As he did so, the wife handed him the identical bag with the identical dollars and said, "When my husband went away he charged me to give this money back to you, for he said, "I am afraid this man will pray me to death if I don't return his money.' " Thus his suit was gained and the others, it was said, never got anything.

One could never tell stories about Joseph Patterson without telling about the time he'd gone on his first missionary journey to the Indians. Upon his return, John McMillan asked him how he got on. "Well," he said, "We started with no provisions but corn meal and bear's grease. My stomach revolted. As I believe in special prayer, we knelt down. I told the Lord I was willing to serve Him, but He must give me something I could eat or I would die." McMillan then asked if the prayer had been answered. "Yes! I lay down in the forest and when I awoke, He gave me an appetite so voracious that corn meal and bear's grease tasted good which was as much an answer to prayer as though He sent me beef and pudding."

I recently visited with Mrs. Anna Connor who wrote Bethel Church's 200 year history and as soon as I said Montours, she said "Oh! Joseph Patterson, my favorite early preacher. You've heard the story of the time he and John McMillan took a trip to Fort Pitt, haven't you?" I said, "No, I haven't heard that one." "Well, it seems it was a cold evening and McMillan and Patterson decided to drop into a tavern for some whiskey to warm themselves. Being very devout men, they both bowed their heads in prayer. John McMillan finished praying but Joseph

Patterson's went on and on. Finally, when he did look up, his whiskey was all gone! John McMillan admonished him, "Joseph, Ye must learn to watch as well as pray."

After he left Montours in 1799, Patterson served at Raccoon until he was sixty-four. But he never really retired. For his last 15 years, he lived in Pittsburgh visiting those who were sick or in trouble and distributing over 6,000 Bibles along with his affectionate counsel and fervent prayers.

There is so much to tell of Joseph Patterson's life and work! When he died on February 4, 1832 in his 80th year, the *Presbyterian* continued his obituary in seven successive issues!

Another old-time minister who seemed outstanding was Michael Law, our third pastor. Some of you probably remember his residence, a log house right near the bridge in Cliff Mine. Michael Law was sent on a missionary journey westward to the Wyandotte and Ottawa Indians in Northern Ohio. The negotiations took longer than expected and while awaiting an answer, Law took a fever and started home. He didn't make it. He died and was buried near what is now Ashland, Ohio on October 9, 1821.

After Thomas Stevenson left Montours in 1854, he preached in Huntingdon Presbytery until the outbreak of the Civil War. He enlisted as a chaplain to a regiment of black soldiers and accompanied this group through the Wilderness Campaign to the storming of Richmond. After peace came, he decided to stay in the army. Most of his troops were illiterate and he set out to teach them "with a spelling book in one hand and the Bible in the other." But Rev. Stevenson is also a martyr. While encamped near the Rio Grande, a cholera epidemic broke out and although he lived through it, he was so weaked he died in Brownsville, Texas in February of 1867.

So, all of our ministers have been saints and martyrs, dearly loved by all in the congregation. Right? Well, not exactly. There were some problems, too. For example, our second preacher, Rev. John McClain, who was installed August 27, 1800. He had a problem. This is how it is recorded in old Session records - "He was a very acceptable preacher; and the congregation grew under his call. The Grand Adversary was permitted, however, to lead him astray in the way of intemperance. A charge was laid against him before the Presbytery of Ohio; he was found guilty and deposed from the ministry in 1810." (Two years after he left Montours). We should not be too quick to judge Rev. McClain. Apparently intemperance was a problem with others. As the minutes of 1816 reveal "The Synod recommends to all ministers and professors of religion to abstain from the unnecessary use of ardent spirits and to endeavor both by precept and example to check the progress of this growing and destructive vice." One problem may have been that these early preachers were paid partly in cash and partly in commodities such

as bushels of wheat. But, (pardon the pun) a more "liquid" asset was this same wheat turned into whiskey. The farmers around here found it much easier to trade and transport whiskey than wheat. That's what the Whiskey Rebellion was all about. So if we were paying the minister in whiskey and expecting him to trade it for all his needs, he may have had problems in getting rid of it all.

If you look through the years that ministers have served Montours, you may notice a few very short terms. For example, Levi Risher served from 1862 to 1863. What was the problem? I hesitate to bring up his distardly deed. As Jane McCandless put it so delicately in *The Story of Old Montours,* "He used the manuscript, contrary to the tradition of the fathers." He read his sermons!

So we see there were some problems with ministers at Montours. It can't only be her Godly ministers who've kept Montours going for 200 years.

Perhaps it is the location of the church. Back in the early 1960's when Hankey Farms was just getting started, Presbytery asked Montours to consider moving to a location more central to its parish, the population center, and on a definite traffic pattern. Dr. Rauschhaupt, Executive Presbyter, advised that in seeking a site for a new church there were three considerations most important. He said, "The first is location; the second is location; and the third is location." Has this been a location helpful to our growth and stability?

The earliest churches in Western Pennsylvania seem to have been located near streams. Chartiers, the earliest, where John McMillan served as preacher is named for Chartiers Creek. The next oldest were the congregations at East Pigeon Creek and West Pigeon Creek. These two churches dropped their earliest name for more Biblical names. East Pigeon Creek became Lebanon and West Pigeon Creek became Bethel. We were next, named for Montours Run which got its name from the island near where it empties into the Ohio, Montours Island. This name can be found on old maps in the Pennsylvania Room at Carnegie Library but we know it better today as Neville Island.

Obviously, the church is not right on Montours Run. The name is more for a general orientation; we are way up the hill from the stream itself. If you look downstairs at a drawing of the plot of land deeded to Montours on April 30, 1794 from James and Katherine Quigley, you will notice a long narrow strip extending far out from the rest of the property. This strip of land was necessary because it contained a spring near the source of the Pinkerton Run. The stream was needed to water the horses which many people rode to church.

Besides the necessity of water, a church should be centrally located and Montours was. Henry Noble and others could come from Noblestown, Robert Vance from Coraopolis, Samuel Riddle from Gayly,

James Ewing from Greggs Station and John Short from out toward the coal washer. These places give you some idea of the distances people travelled in those days to go to church. Mrs. Connor of Bethel says that it seems to her one church served all within a fifteen mile radius. Our young people who hiked ten miles from Montours to Hebron last Sunday in a Walk to help the hungry can appreciate the distance. The worshippers came on foot or on horseback and when they neared the place of worship, the women sat down, undid their kerchiefs and took out and put on their shoes, thus keeping them nice for the big occasion. (By the way, when you look at the old drawings of the property, you will notice an old measurement - a perch. A perch was an earlier term for a rod which is sixteen and one-half feet, a measurement not used much any more. I can envision the next person researching Montours' history saying, "Now how far is that in meters and kilometers?")

Another point to look for in location of a church is, is it on the traffic pattern? Well, it was. Rev. Thompson, in the history he wrote in 1942, said "Many of the pioneers who trekked westward undoubtedly used the old pike - the Steubenville Pike - which wended its way just a few rods south and west of the Montours Church, the old road-bed being only a few feet beyond the manse and the old historic roadway is still used by our next-door neighbor to gain approach to his barn." I don't know when the road in front of the church ceased being the main route. Up until the new Route 22 and 30 was built, the church road was rainbow-shaped; you could turn in down by where Tonidale Gulf now stands or about where the parking lot of Holiday Inn is now located. Then came the new road and Montours is on a dead-end street, "on the way to nowhere." We've had to make up for this by trying to be an extremely visible presence in the community with programs such as the Private Day Kindergarten, the spire and signs, and other programs to let people know where we are.

If an outstanding location can't account for its longevity, could it be that the building helped? We've had three. The first was a log structure, not a primitive log cabin, but rather a more "modern" building. Downstairs you can see a print of the type of church this first building was but we have no actual drawings and cameras hadn't been invented yet. The first building was built of hewn logs and was cruciform in shape. One arm of the cross was on the north side about the middle of the wall and in that offset was the pulpit, up several steps from the floor. Just in front of the pulpit, on a platform raised a few steps from the floor and enclosed in front and on one side, stood the "choir." The choir was two persons, one to line out the Psalms or Hymns (that is, read out the words for the next line, as there were no hymnals for the congregation), and the other to "pitch the tune." By 1830, the membership of Montours was 275 and the log structure was undoubtedly getting crowded. Plans were

drawn up, the bricks were fired and the "new" church built in 1832. Many here remember that old building. It had two wide aisles with great barrel-shaped stoves at each end of the aisles. Wide aisles were necessary in early days because the Lord's Supper was served at tables in the aisles. Tokens were used then. These were little medals of lead with the letter M printed on them. (You can see two of these in our historical display downstairs). These tokens could only be obtained by attending a Preparatory Service and were collected by the elders after all were seated at the Communion table.

These first two churches were built right out in front of the present structure. According to tradition, the 1832 church was built around the log church and the people continued to worship there until the new one was ready to floor and plaster. Then one day either at or after a congregational meeting, they tore the old one down and took it out through the windows and doors of the new building. The newspaper article lent to us by Harry Trautman is on display downstairs and shows very clearly the location of these two buildings.

This present structure was dedicated at special services the week of October 25, 1925. The program from that occasion lists the following on the Session: H. E. Jackson, C. M. Boynes, Ray McCandless, Wm. Hughes, R. J. Marshall and E. J. Link. On the Trustees were: G. J. Trautman, W. F. Langer, J. H. Uffelman, James Reed, R. J. Marshall and E. J. Link. President of the Missionary Society was Mrs. J. Paul Stewart.

They've all been good sound buildings, very well taken care of under the stewardship of our members but this cannot be why we've endured. For the first ten years, there was no building! The hardy souls worshipped out-of-doors under the trees. A speaker's stand called "the tent" was used by the minister. It was elevated about four feet above the ground, had a breastwork in front and a log bench in the rear. Far out from this tent, seats were built of logs. For Communion, they sat at log tables, covered with snowy linen and holding the vessels of the sacred symbols. (There is a picture downstairs of one of these outdoor Communion Services.)

The changes in buildings might lead one to think that the people of Montours adjusted easily to changes. Maybe this is why we've lasted 200 years; we've been able to adapt and adjust easily to changing situations. Well .... we have had changes. As transportation progressed, we discarded the "upping block" used to mount and dismount from horseback and replaced it with a large platform to help get into and out of spring wagons and "top buggies." Gradually the need for the long row of hitching posts along the road decreased and the sheds for the horses were removed. The first minister to own a car was Rev. Hail. Miss McCandless writes, "We knew Henry Ford made them cheap; we also

knew the Hails were good managers; but it was beyond our imagination how any minister could support a wife and family and buy a second-hand "Model T" on a salary of $58.33 a month!"

There were other changes. In September, 1852, Presbyterian Magazine wrote, "Some people are never satisfied with things as they are. We have been lately struck with a change introduced into the forms of worship in many of the "New School Presbyterian Churches." We refer to the change from standing to sitting in prayer and from sitting to standing in singing. Let our ministers take warning. There is a tendency sometimes to get up something new in the excitement of the moment."

Other changes have been complete turn-arounds. We used to have Sunday School only during the Summer months, not during the Winter when the weather was cold and the roads were bad. They had a big Sunday School celebration for the closing in the Fall where the children received candy and all ate fried chicken, homemade cake and pies, etc. Sound familiar? Now we close Sunday School for the Summer and have a big picnic. (One thing hasn't changed a bit. Women of Montours are good cooks!)

One of the most difficult changes was from singing the old Psalms to the new ones which a 1763 overture to General Assembly called "Doctor Watt's **imitation** of David's Psalms." The Centenary Memorial gives us this reaction of an early church member. "On the first occasion of giving out a Psalm from the new book, an irate member was so sorely grieved with the impropriety of the proceeding that he started from his seat, approached the pulpit and threatened to drag the minister down by the neck!!"

Perhaps it isn't adjustment to change, it is the people themselves. Have the members of Montours been outstanding? Well, some have. Take, for example, Robert Vance, one of the signers of the call to Joseph Patterson in 1789. Vance is frequently called the "first white settler where Coraopolis now stands." In 1776, he enlisted in the Revoluntionary War and was commissioned a First Lieutenant. In 1778, he was made a Captain and assigned to the Ninth Virginia Regiment. He had a part in capturing the outpost at Yorktown and witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis. Ten years later, back home, it was his team of horses that hauled the logs for the first church. Along with Samuel Riddle, Henry Noble, John Short, William Gordon, and John McMichael, in 1794, he signed the deed buying this piece of property where we are standing today. He is buried here, along with twenty-six other Revolutionary soldiers, in Montours Cemetery.

But most of our members haven't been heroes. Our most recent interim pastor, Bill Provost, described the people of Montours as exhibiting a "stubborn good will." I don't know which half of the phrase he meant to emphasize - the "stubborn" or the "good will." But we've

been ordinary people - hard-working, thrifty, caring and loving. We don't think of ourselves as "History-Makers."

What is the answer? If it hasn't been the ministers, or the location, or the building, or the people and their adaptibility, what has kept us here?

We all know the answer. God's Providence led our ancestors to this spot and His guidance and faithfulness have supported us through these two hundred years. We are here because God wants us to be here.

I'd like to close with the same words Rev. R. J. Phipps used to close his Centennial address. I will only change two words.

"She (Montours) lives and Christ reigns! Let us not forget on this **Bi**-Centennial day that He who is "the same yesterday, today and forever" has blessed this church in the past. Let our hearts ever be filled with profound gratitude to God, the giver of all, and our lips with praises to His Dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom alone He has rendered so favorable to this church in years gone by. Let us begin our **Third** Century with humble trust in God, and send down through the next century or centuries a radiance and beauteous purity of consecrated lives so that good may be said of us one hundred years hence. Amen." And Amen.

Written by Margaret Ann Campbell Trautman.
Compiled from notes and writings of Jane McCandless and others.

"The Church of Our Fathers"

Montour Church is truly the "Church of Our Fathers," established in the year of 1778 the history of "Montour's" is largely the history of the settlement and development of North Fayette Township.

Numbered among the pioneers who were instrumental in the starting of "Montour Church" we find the names of many whose descendants are even now active members and supporters of Montour. A few of the names mentioned by the historian are as follows; Noble, McBride, Jeffrey, Turner, Stewart, Guy, Walker, McMichael, McCandless, Riddle, Elliott, Scott, Miller, Tucker, McCoy, Nesbit, Hall, and many others.

Of them the historians further relate, "they were God's chosen people, sent here to conquer this rugged land for God. They came here long ago, yea, before this nation was born." They came and pitched their tents on these hills and in the valleys amid great privation and dangers. They knew not the moment when the blood thirsty Shawnee or Delaware might burn their homes and murder their wives and little ones.

But, those old settlers, schooled in the hardships and severities of their times trusted in God and like Abraham of old, "they built their altar wherever they pitched their tent."

The photograph on the first page of this pamphlet shows Montour Church as it is today. Built in the year of our Lord 1832 it has stood the ravages of time and the elements for a period of ninety years. Who shall weigh its influence and who shall count its blessings on the community in which it has served? Who shall measure its ever widening influence on our lives and the lives of those who have gone before us? Following in the footsteps of our fathers and justifying their magnificent faith in God it is now imperative that a new house of worship be erected, so that the activities of Montour's may continue, a power in the community and an everlasting glory to God through our Savior Jesus Christ.

To finance the building of a new church it has been decided to appeal to our members and friends for sufficient funds to erect a building that will be adequate to house all the activities of Montour.

A pledge card is enclosed with the request that you sign and mail at your earliest convenience.

If less than 60% of the **total estimated cost** is pledged it is understood and agreed that **all pledges shall be null and void.** Pledges may be made payable in full when building contract is let. (If you pledge in this manner you will be notified when contract is let.)

Pledges may also be made payable in equal yearly amounts for five years.

A space is left on pledge card where you may indicate your preference as to method of payment.

In making your pledge, please remember this is our first appeal for building funds in ninety years.

Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase.

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. *Prov. 3:9-10.*

Outline of Present Activities of Church

Church Membership.....160

Sunday School Membership.....170

Benevolences.....$ 950.00

Congregational.....$2500.00

SOCIETIES

Ladies' Aid Society

Membership.....35

Missionary Society

Membership.....35

Christian Endeavor

Membership.....50

OFFICERS

SESSION	TRUSTEES
John C. McMichael	George J. Troutman
Ray McCandless	John Uffelman
C. M. Boynes	John D. Lutz
Robert E. Corbett	Wm. F. Langer
Wm. Hughes	James H. Reed

Robert J. Marshall

Churches which have their origin in Montour Church

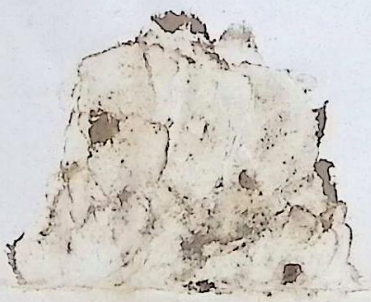
Bethany

Sharon

Pisgah

Valley

Carnegie

Forest Grove

Oakdale